

**HISTORIC JEFF NEIGHBORHOOD
LAFAYETTE, INDIANA**

**AN AMENDMENT TO
THE ADOPTED LAND USE PLAN**

**PREPARED FOR MEMBERS OF
THE HISTORIC JEFF NEIGHBORHOOD
BY THE STAFF OF
THE AREA PLAN COMMISSION OF TIPPECANOE COUNTY**

**ADOPTED BY THE AREA PLAN COMMISSION
OF TIPPECANOE COUNTY: DECEMBER 20, 2000**

**ADOPTED BY THE LAFAYETTE CITY COUNCIL:
JANUARY 8, 2001**

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INTRODUCTION:

Residents of the Historic Jeff Neighborhood have expressed a desire in the recent past to update the zoning in their neighborhood to better reflect and protect the existing land use pattern. Discussions during the neighborhood group's meetings led the residents to seek help from the Lafayette City Council.

On February 7, 2000, the City Council adopted Resolution 2000-9. This document requested the Area Plan Commission of Tippecanoe County study the neighborhood, and create, with its residents and property owners, first a *Land Use Plan* amendment and secondly a zoning proposal, consistent with the principals of the *New Unified Zoning Ordinance*. The resolution set study area boundaries east of 9th Street, south of Union, west of Erie, and north of the alley that runs parallel and south of Ferry.

APC Assistant Director Bernie Gulker and Current Planner Kathy Lind met with the neighborhood group initially in February of 2000. At that meeting members assigned themselves research tasks including:

- Planned changes to non-government utility infrastructure
- Survey of street, alley and sidewalk conditions
- Checking with the City's Community Development Office and also Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) to discover what neighborhood reinvestment monies are available
- Institutional expansion: specifically the old Jeff High School property

The planners agreed to help the Historic Jeff Neighborhood establish goals and develop a Land Use Plan based on those goals and the assembled data, and to discuss other actions the neighborhood might take in its own behalf.

The Land Use Plan embodied in this report, serves as a development guide for the neighborhood. Planning staff has written it as a proposed amendment to the

Land Use Element of the adopted *Comprehensive Plan for Tippecanoe County*. The Area Plan Commission and the Lafayette City Council must hold public hearings on this amendment prior to its adoption.

Following adoption, this plan should at least serve as a policy guide to the Area Plan Commission, the City Council, the City Engineer's Office and the Lafayette Division of the Area Board of Zoning Appeals. It is up to the members of the Historic Jeff Neighborhood to monitor the activities of these groups, and provide them input when necessary. This ongoing partnership between the neighborhood, City Hall, NHS, Lafayette Urban Enterprise Association and APC will result in other revitalization strategies, also designed to achieve established goals. Also, the plan will serve as a guide for a neighborhood-wide rezoning proposal per the City Council's resolution.

DEFINING PROBLEMS AND SETTING GOALS:

Problem identification is the first and most basic step in this neighborhood planning process. Before we can plan for the future in a meaningful way, we must identify the problems that need to be addressed in our planning effort.

The Area Plan Commission has long held that citizens do the best job of problem identification, and the Historic Jeff Neighborhood is blessed with an active and interested membership. As a first step, the group set a meeting for March 21, 2000 to participate in a problem identification exercise. Absentee landlords and owners of businesses located within the neighborhood were invited to attend though most chose not to be present. Ten citizens attended, as did two staff members from the Area Plan Commission.

We use a technique called Nominal Group Process in situations like this. We use it because it ensures input from everyone who attends the meeting. Staff divided the participants into two subgroups. We assigned a staff member to work with each subgroup.

Participants had ten minutes to list their responses to this question:

*What do **YOU** think are the problems and challenges facing the people of the Historic Jeff Neighborhood over the next 10 or 15 years?*

Within each subgroup, participants, in clockwise fashion, read a single response in turn, as Staff members wrote each down. This circulation around the table continued until all participants had expressed all items on all lists.

Still within subgroups, participants voted their choice of the five most significant responses. Then the full group reassembled, discussed and combined their "Top 5" lists, and then voted on one final list of responses. Staff tallied the ballots, reported briefly to the participants, and at a meeting on May 16, 2000 distributed to the neighborhood the results of the March meeting in written form. (A copy of these results, which includes all responses made that evening, and how they were prioritized, is included as an appendix to this report.)

What follows is the Statement of Goals for the Historic Jeff Neighborhood. Planning staff has derived these from the compilation of problems and challenges raised by participants at the March 21st session.

A LIST OF GOALS & OBJECTIVES FOR HISTORIC JEFF NEIGHBORHOOD

These goals have been derived from the lists of problems and issues generated by participants in the March 21st Nominal Group Process. They cover four major concerns expressed by the neighborhood.

- I. Reuse two key properties within the neighborhood:
 - A. old Jeff High School which Ivy Tech will soon be vacating
 - B. the rail corridor along the eastern edge of the neighborhood

- II. Involve city government in the neighborhood:
 - A. enforce existing ordinances
 - 1. Building Code violations
 - 2. Noise ordinance violations
 - 3. Tenancy violations
 - B. rezoning the neighborhood
- III. Encourage families to move here/stay here
 - A. promote Washington School as the "neighborhood school"
 - B. promote the neighborhood as "family-oriented"
- IV. Continue to improve existing housing stock:
 - A. keep historic integrity of the neighborhood
 - B. restore and enhance investment properties
 - C. increase owner-occupancy

At the April meeting, the group heard reports from the volunteers who had gathered information as well as from staff members, who presented two maps: one which indicated land use and the second which showed the apparent condition of the principal use buildings on each lot, as seen from the street.

The utility companies that were contacted, including Cinergy PSI, Indiana Gas, GTE, and Insight Communications, stated that no new projects have been planned for the Historic Jeff neighborhood. Of course, substantial growth or a large development would require review and possibly some adjustments by the utilities. There are plans for a new storm and sanitary sewer trunk line to be installed either in the old rail corridor, or under Erie Street. The City Engineer's Office believes that there are currently no major problems with the neighborhood's sewer and water lines. (As an aside, the group did learn that the

sewer located between Cincinnati and Brown Streets is private and is not owned or operated as part of the City's system.)

Condition of streets, alleys and sidewalks in the neighborhood was checked out with the following assessment. West of 12th Street alleys are good, the City is scheduled to repair sidewalks, and the streets are OK except along Elizabeth between 10th and 11th which needs some work. North Street, which is made up of brick pavers, is marked for repair. The group agreed that bricked North Street is an asset to the historical character of the neighborhood and as such should be maintained and kept paved in brick. The area east of 12th Street has paved alleys, streets are OK, some sidewalk repairs are needed (however, they are not scheduled for repair), especially along Erie.

The neighborhood reinvestment report included the following information:

City plans – Current CDBG funded projects include sidewalk repair and infill for targeted streets and continued available funding for the HomeProud housing rehab loan program operated by NHS. The city is also considering the issue of improved street lighting in Historic Jefferson.

Lafayette Neighborhood Housing Services – This organization has rehabbed many homes in the neighborhood and maintains rental property. While not currently working on an Historic Jeff rehab project, the neighborhood is targeted for LNHS programs, such as acquisition and rehab should a feasible opportunity arise. The neighborhood is also targeted for special loan products that offer affordable interest rates to new homebuyers in Historic Jeff. LNHS also has secured funds for HomeProud rehab loans at 3% for individuals who do not qualify under the city's program.

Lafayette Urban Enterprise Association – Historic Jeff sits within the Urban Enterprise Zone, making it eligible for special programs, such as Paint the Town. LUEA is a funding resource for special projects as well.

The old Jefferson High School building located on 9th Street, which has housed IVY Tech for many years, will soon be vacant. The Historic Jeff Neighborhood group learned that LSC has held a "brownfield meeting" regarding the current status of the building. LUEA is bringing in a consultant to assess the possible

future use and environmental concerns regarding the old school property. Several developers appear to be interested in the site, possibly as a combination office space/residential conversion, although at this point, nothing has been permanently decided.

At the other end of the Neighborhood lies another soon-to-be-vacant land use: the Norfolk Southern rail corridor. APC staff members met with Lafayette Railroad Relocation staff and learned that the plan that they have put together for the reuse of the corridor shows open space for the majority of the area. The plan shows a row of houses facing away from the Historic Jeff Neighborhood and towards the Perrin Avenue Neighborhood along the southern third of the rail corridor, along with warehouse/commercial space at the Union Street/Erie intersection.

GENERATING A LAND USE PLAN

With staff assistance, the Historic Jeff Neighborhood has designed a neighborhood land use plan to help achieve some of the goals established at the March meeting.

On June 13, 2000, planning staff presented the neighborhood group with three maps, each showing a variety of alternative neighborhood land use futures. These alternatives were based on:

- current land use and building condition patterns;
- the data assembled by Historic Jeff Neighborhood residents; and
- various aspects of the Goals and Objectives as amended and adopted by the Historic Jeff Neighborhood Group

All three sets of alternatives exhibited basic land use elements that typify the Historic Jeff Neighborhood today: areas of moderate to high density residential housing, institutional land uses, and along the edges of the neighborhood (Union to the north, Ferry to the south, Erie to the east) retail and service related as well as medical related uses.

What differed amongst the land use alternatives was not so much the types of land uses proposed, but rather the borders that separate them. The neighborhood is threatened in two different ways. First by the potential of incompatible land uses moving into the old Jefferson High School building as well as the railroad corridor to the east. Secondly, the neighborhood association feels threatened by a lack of community involvement in its area, and in particular, by a lack of City code enforcement. The two positive aspects of the neighborhood that the group wished to nurture, protect and promote are its family-oriented nature, and the historic character of its buildings and streets.

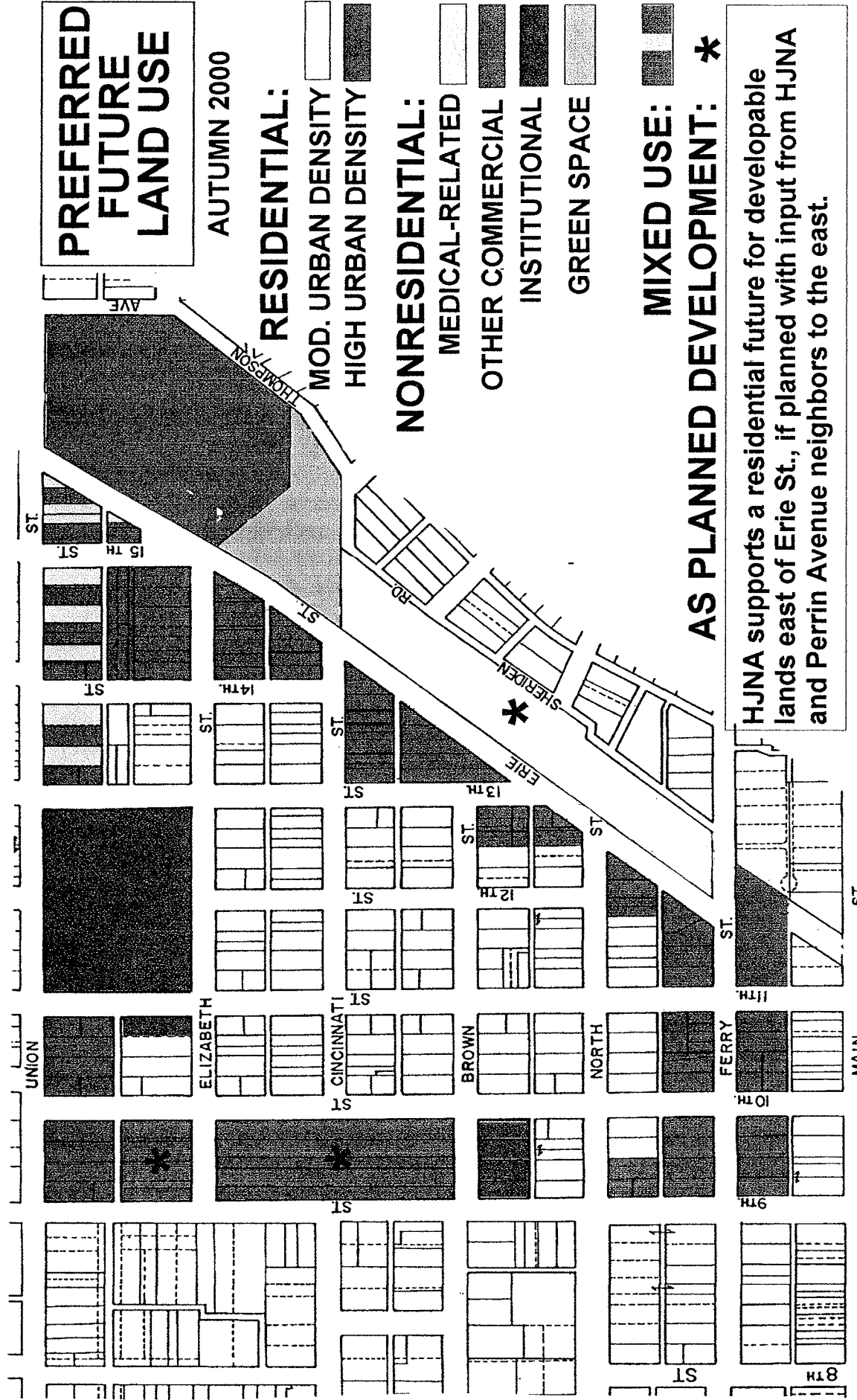
Questions the group had to answer before a single *Land Use Plan* Amendment could be decided upon were as follows:

- What should happen along the Erie Street corridor? Do we want to expand the commercial and warehouse sector currently located along the west side of the street, or do we want to scale this sector back east across the tracks leaving more area for residential in-fill? On the east side of the street where tracks will soon be removed, do we see a residential future, commercial/warehouse future, or a recreational future?
- Do we want to entirely do away with a high density residential sector and in its place have a moderate density area which would in fact create 27 non-conforming apartment buildings (roughly 20% of the properties within that sector)? Or would it be better if we were to allow for a small area of higher density residential use – so that multi-family housing would still be permitted within the neighborhood – but leave most of the area within the medium density residential sector?
- What should the Plan show for the soon to be vacated IVY Tech building (the old Jefferson High School)? Do we want a commercial future, a high-density residential future, or some combination of the two?

THE PLAN

The Historic Jeff Neighborhood Association's answers to these questions led to a fourth map, which we called the Preferred Land Use Alternative. This scenario, shown on the following page, will now serve in this context as an amendment to the *Land Use Element* of the adopted *Comprehensive Plan for Tippecanoe*

HISTORIC JEFF NEIGHBORHOOD



County. It is the Land Use Plan for the Historic Jeff Neighborhood, and its components are as follows:

- Keep the current mix of service and medical-related uses along the south side of Union Street east of Washington School. The newly constructed apartment complex at 14th and Elizabeth would remain high-density residential.
- The west side of Erie would be a mix of high urban density and commercial uses, much as it is currently. Along the soon to be vacated railroad tracks on the east side of Erie, there would be three distinct areas. Land between Erie and Sheridan Road would be considered for residential infill, as long as input from both Historic Jeff and the Perrin Avenue neighborhoods is considered and utilized. (Because of the potential impact this area could have on both neighborhoods, the group felt it important to include the Perrin Avenue group in any proposed development discussion.) The type of zoning which would promote the most discussion and negotiation between interested parties is the Planned Development zoning district. The northernmost property where it intersects with Union Street would remain commercial in nature. A recreational area would serve as a buffer between commercial uses to the north and residential to the south as well as providing a bridge between the neighborhood to the east and Historic Jeff to the west. (The southern tip of this area at Ferry and Erie, is currently being leased as parking for one or two office/businesses across the streets. It is important that these uses continue to have a place to park so that they do not negatively impact residential uses in the neighborhood.)
- The Historic Jeff properties, currently used by IVY Tech, would have a mixed use future, possibly a commercial first floor and residential uses above. The neighborhood feels it is important to hear any proposed development of these properties as a planned development. The neighborhood is concerned about potential parking problems, as well as noise and trash generated by an apartment conversion. The parking lot on the north side of Elizabeth Street if developed with the old high school building, could help ensure that parking standards would be met. The PD process will allow neighborhood input at a very early stage in the rezoning, allowing for necessary negotiation and compromise.
- The interior of the neighborhood, in fact the majority of the neighborhood, would take on a more moderate urban residential density. This would typically allow one and two-family dwellings, but no new multi-family dwellings.

In a nutshell, the Plan proposed here would keep the existing institutional uses (the two churches, Washington School), and would also keep the existing ring of mostly commercial, service, and medical-related uses that form the edges of the Historic Jeff Neighborhood. Residential infill and recreational areas are proposed

for the soon to be abandoned rail corridor. The existing residential core would remain, eventually at a more moderate density, by discouraging higher density that allows new apartment construction and conversion.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

As adopted, this *Land Use Plan* Amendment functions only as a policy guide to the City Council, local government agencies and the Lafayette Division of the Area Board of Zoning Appeals. To ensure its value, this Land Use Plan must be implemented through a series of further actions. These include close contact between the neighborhood group and City officials regarding building code enforcement, including enforcing tenancy limits in existing apartment buildings, and also having a say in what the City plans for the soon to be abandoned Norfolk Southern rail corridor. The group must also stay vigilant with regard to reuse of the existing IVY Tech building and properties. The Historic Jeff Neighborhood group must work to get more involvement from its residents, to build neighborhood pride and promote its “family-oriented” nature. It is important to establish communication links between neighbors and absentee landlords to help stimulate action to make improvements where needed to individual properties in the community.

Another implementation strategy is to revise the neighborhood’s zoning map to help in time, to move the Neighborhood in the direction of its preferred Land Use Plan. This work will begin as soon as the Plan is adopted by the Area Plan Commission and Lafayette City Council as an amendment to the *Land Use Element* of the *Comprehensive Plan for Tippecanoe County*. The rezoning process begins with letters inviting the neighborhood to two Ordinance Committee meetings. Someone from the neighborhood group will need to present the association’s proposed zoning map to the Committee. These meetings culminate with the Ordinance Committee choosing a zoning map it prefers, which then is presented to the full Area Plan Commission and Lafayette City Council for action.

APPENDIX A

HISTORIC JEFF NEIGHBORHOOD NOMINAL GROUP PROCESS RESULTS

Bernie's Group Top Five Picks

- A. Old Jeff
- B. Rezoning
- C. Impacts of reuse of rail corridor
- D. Deterioration of certain rental properties
- E. Enforcement of Ordinances
 - Building Code Violations
 - Noise
 - Etc.

Kathy's Group Top Five Picks (Includes two tie votes)

- F. Ordinance Violations
- G. Future of Old Jeff Properties
- H. Increase owner-occupancy
- I. Neighborhood is family-oriented
- J. Too many tenants per unit
- K. Promote neighborhood school and keep it
- L. Improvement of investment properties

Top Five Lists Combined and Prioritized

- 1. Future of Old Jeff property
- 2. Enforcement of Ordinances
 - Building Code Violations
 - Noise
 - Etc.
 - Tenancy
- 3. Rezoning
- 4. Improvement of investment properties
- 5. Increase Owner-occupancy
- 6. Impacts of reuse of rail corridor
- 7. Neighborhood is family--oriented
- 8. Promote neighborhood school and keep it

Group #1 Findings (Bernie's Group)

- A. Trash out of cans, litter in yards
- B. Heavier traffic because of Erie Street?
- C. Old Jeff
- D. Lighting for safety
- E. Junked cars
- F. Deterioration of certain rental properties
- G. Keeping drugs out of neighborhood
- H. Loss of owner-occupied housing
- I. Sidewalk and alley repairs
- J. Speeders (especially 10th Street) & other intersections
- K. Renter's lack of pride
- L. Enforcement of ordinances:
 - Code violation
 - Noise
 - Etc.
- M. Making sure no more big apartment buildings
- N. Impacts of re-use of rail corridor
- O. Rezoning
- P. Number of apartment occupants
- Q. Parking
- R. Repair North Street but maintain historic character

Group #2 Findings (Kathy's Group)

- A. Ordinance violations
- B. Future of Old Jeff Property
- C. Possible parking problems depending on Jeff re-use
- D. Fear of high density housing replacing S-F homes
- E. Neighborhood is family-oriented - let's not lose that
- F. Trash is unfairly dumped in privately owned dumpsters
- G. Too many tenants per unit
- H. Increase owner-occupancy
- I. Safety, especially in public areas
- J. Well-lit safe sidewalks
- K. Promoting our neighborhood school and keeping it
- L. Changing the image (perception) of our downtown neighborhood
- M. Working on neighborliness
- N. Stray animals
- O. House at 12th and Brown
- P. Out-of-service vehicles
- Q. Curfew
- R. Improvement of investment properties
- S. The railroad corridor
- T. 9th & Ferry
- U. Neighborhood Identification

APPENDIX B

HISTORIC JEFF NEIGHBORHOOD LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Betty Bumbleburg
Ted Bumbleburg
Rosie Evers
Paul Grover
John Howieson
Dennis Juds
Suzanne Juds
Cheryl R. McKeon
Dick Murray
Jan Payne
Jerry G. Smith
Steve Thomas, Thomas Wood Finishing
Pat Wilkerson
Kari Wolf
Bernie Gulker, Area Plan Commission of Tippecanoe County
Kathy Lind, Area Plan Commission of Tippecanoe County
Lori Kelley, Lafayette Community Development Department
Belinda Kiger, Lafayette Parks Department
Marci Jordan, Lafayette Neighborhood Housing Services
Adam Murphy, Lafayette Neighborhood Housing Services
Dennis Carson, Lafayette Urban Enterprise Association
VaLinda McBride, Lafayette Urban Enterprise Association

